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SUPERMAN

IN ACTION COMICS

1992

40



...AT
THE
HANDS
OF
HI-TECH!

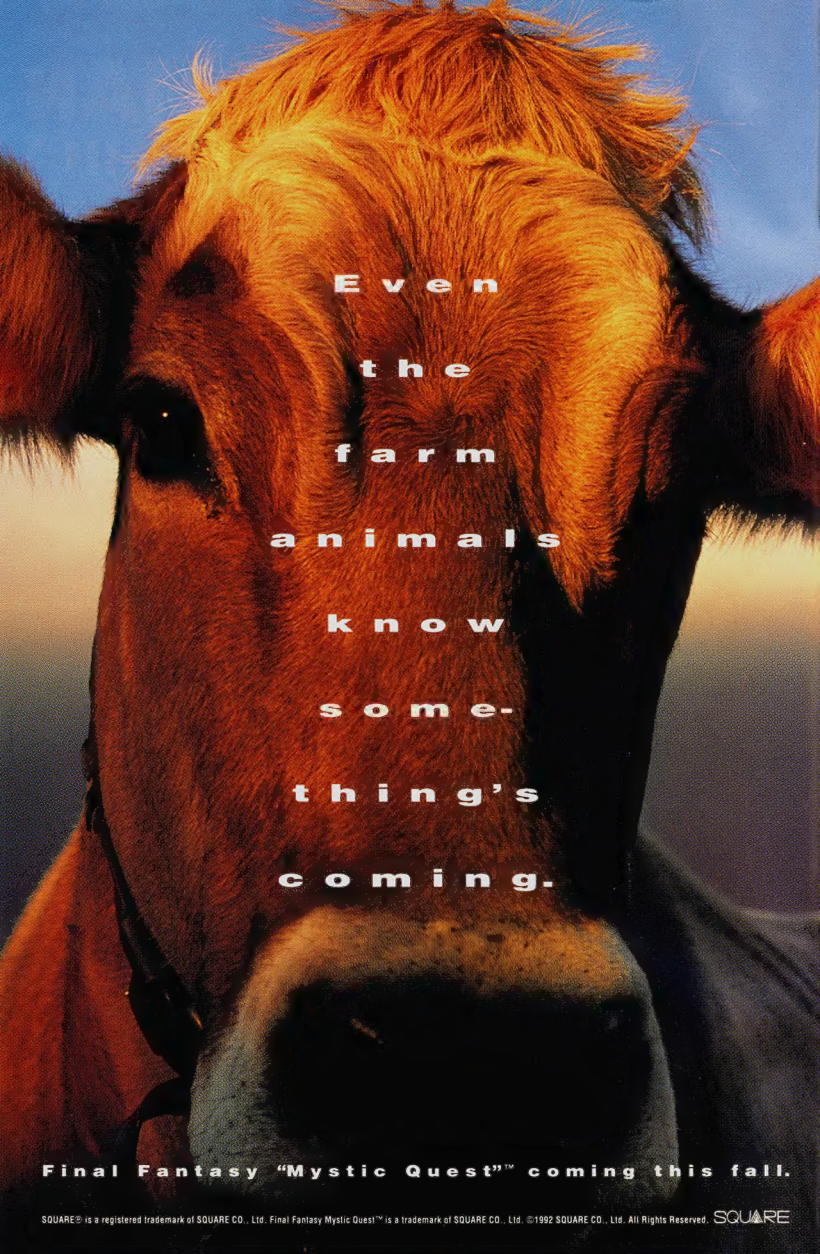
DOOMSDAY
IS COMING!

SUPERMAN

7593255-3

ABELL + AUSTIN

BY ROGER STERN, DUSTY ABELL & TERRY AUSTIN



**E v e n
t h e
f a r m
a n i m a l s
k n o w
s o m e -
t h i n g ' s
c o m i n g .**

Final Fantasy "Mystic Quest"™ coming this fall.

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I'M AMAZED THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO CREATE SO PRECISE A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION ... I KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND VISUALS ON SUPERMAN!

NICE PECTORAL DEVELOPMENT!

AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP -- I NEVER WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO ASSEMBLE ALL THIS DATA ON HIM MYSELF.

BUT ... FRANKLY, ALL YOU'VE GIVEN ME ON THE LIMITS OF HIS ENDURANCE ARE ROUGH APPROXIMATIONS!

GALINTLET!

QUITE CORRECT, HI-TECH! SUPERMAN'S ENDURANCE HAS NEVER BEEN ADEQUATELY TESTED.

THAT IS YOUR JOB!

ROGER STERN - WRITER
DUSTY ABELL - GUEST PENCILLER
TERRY AUSTIN - GUEST INKER
BILL OAKLEY - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
JENNIFER FRANK - ASSISTANT ED.
MIKE CARLIN - EDITOR

SUPERMAN created by
JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER

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G-7580

LOOK, DON'T GET ME WRONG, I ENJOY A CHALLENGE -- BUT I ALSO LIKE TO KNOW WHAT I'M UP AGAINST!

BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION, SUPERMAN ONCE SURVIVED A MULTI-MEGATON NUCLEAR EXPLOSION --!*

FORTY MEGATONS, TO BE PRECISE! I SHOULD KNOW... I PERSONALLY SUPPLIED THE JOKER WITH THE DEVICE.

THE JOKER? YOU GAVE A FUSION BOMB ...TO THE JOKER?!

OF COURSE NOT! I SOLD IT TO HIM!

GRANTED, IT'S NO SIMPLE MATTER TO DEAL WITH A MADMAN... BUT IT WAS WORTH THE RISK. THE DATA I GATHERED WAS INVALUABLE!

ANALYSIS OF THAT INCIDENT HAS CONFIRMED THAT SUPERMAN WAS LEFT SEVERELY DRAINED FOR WELL OVER HALF AN HOUR.

THAT ANALYSIS HAS MADE OUR PLAN FEASIBLE, HI-TECH. BELIEVE ME, YOU CAN BEAT SUPERMAN...

...UNLESS YOU'VE LOST YOUR NERVE?

LOST--? NO WAY! I'LL KICK HIS BUTT!

GOOD! WITH THE STRATEGY I'VE MAPPED OUT, AND ALL THE REDUNDANCIES WE'VE BUILT INTO YOUR ARMOR, I HAVE NO DOUBT OF THAT...

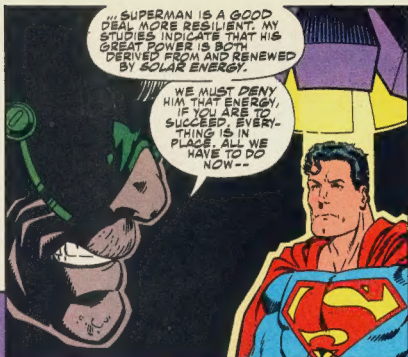
...IF YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE READY.

ALL SYSTEMS ARE GREEN FOR GO, AND SO AM I!

SUPERMAN'S CALLED "THE MAN OF STEEL," RIGHT?

WELL, THIS IS WHAT I THINK OF STEEL!

KER-R-RUK





"...BUT IT'S STILL VERY MUCH A DANGER... SOME SORT OF HUGE THERMAL BEAM!"

"OMIGOD! NOW WHAT?!"



"WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S MAKIN' THE RIVER BOIL!"

"IT'S A DEATH RAY! FROM SPACE!"

"HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS CAN WE TAKE?!"

"YA MEAN, LIKE THAT SWARM-CLOUD? B-BUT EVEN SUPERMAN COULDN'T STOP THAT! *

"YOU WON'T HAVE TO TAKE IT MUCH LONGER!"

* IN SUPERMAN #67.

"THE SWARM WAS SOME SORT OF COSMIC GROUP-ORGANISM. I COULDN'T STOP IT WITHOUT LUTHOR'S HELP--"



"--BUT A HEAT BEAM, EVEN ONE THIS GIANTIC, IS SOMETHING SUPERMAN SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE ON HIS OWN!"

"LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!"

"AWRIGHT! GO GET 'EM, BIG GUY!"

FOOTBALL ACTION SO REAL, IT'S... BONE-CRUNCHING!

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THE ARCADE
SMASH!**



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TACKLES!**



**OVER 30 OFFENSIVE
AND DEFENSIVE PLAYS!**



**SETTLE THE SCORE WITH
AN ALL-OUT BRAWL!**

FROM THE WAY
THE RAY NARROWS,
ITS POINT OF
ORIGIN MUST BE
IN EARTH
ORBIT!

--THAT I
CAN FINALLY
BLOCK IT
FROM DOING ANY
FURTHER
DAMAGE TO
THE HARBOR!

OW!

AT ANY RATE,
THE BEAM'S
NARROWED
ENOUGH HERE
IN THE UPPER
THERMOSPHERE--

THERE'S...
CONSIDERABLE
POWER BEHIND
THIS! OF COURSE,
THERE'D HAVE
TO BE... FORTY TO
FIFTY RIVER
WATERS FROM
ORBIT...

...BUT EXPERIENCING
IT... UP CLOSE AND
PERSONAL... IS
ANOTHER THING
ENTIRELY!

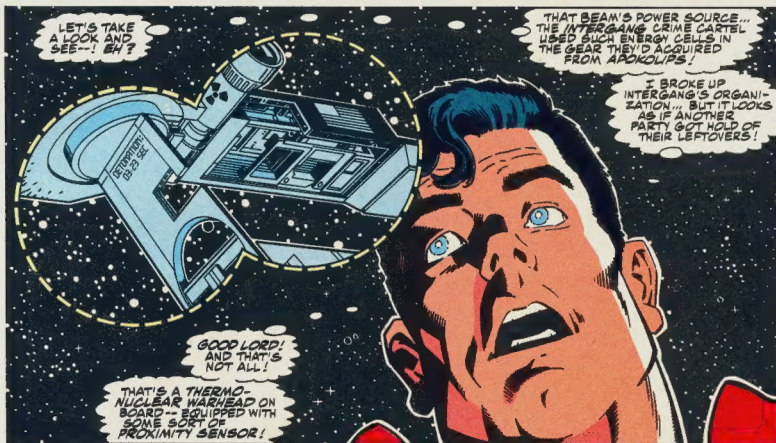
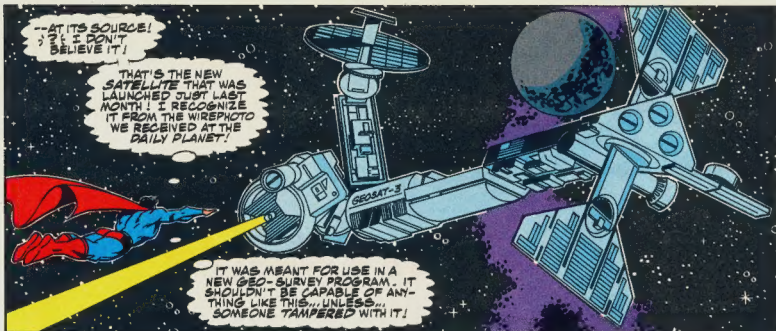
THIS...
SURPASSES MY
OWN... HEAT
VISION!

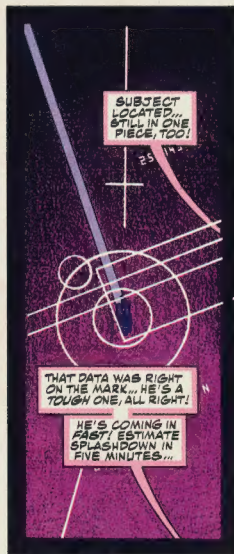
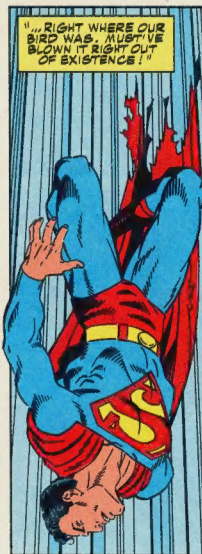
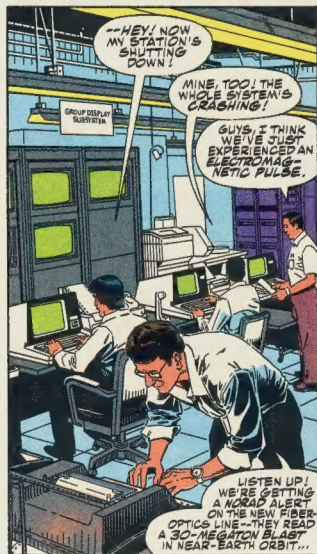
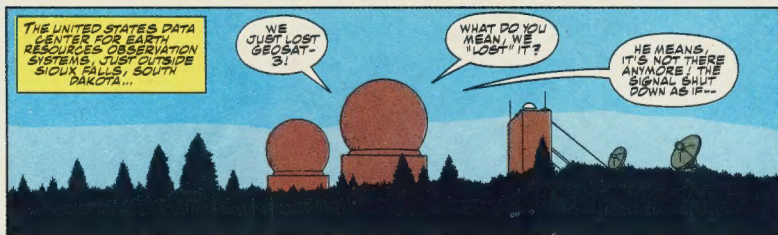
WHAT SORT...
OF TECHNOLOGY...
AM I UP AGAINST...
HERE?

DON'T KNOW...
HOW MUCH MORE...
EVEN I... CAN...
TAKE!

GYAAAAHH!

NO
GOOD! IF
I'M GOING TO
STOP THIS
IT'LL HAVE
TO BE--





"...FOUR..."

"...THREE..."

"...TWO..."

"...ONE..."

"...OUCH! I
BET THAT
HURT!"

"WELL... WHERE
IS HE?"

"LONG RANGE TELEMETRY
INDICATED HE WAS CAUGHT
BY THE EDGE OF THE
SHOCKWAVE. THE EXPLOSION
SHOULDN'T'VE KILLED HIM..."

"...AND SURELY THE
FALL WOULDN'T--!!
I HOPE NOT... I DON'T
WANT THAT--"

!HUUUAUGH!?

!HUPH!?

"AH, THERE HE IS!
MUST'VE JUST HAD
THE WIND KNOCKED
OUT OF HIM!"

"HATE TO KICK
HIM WHEN
HE'S DOWN,
BUT IT'S THE
ONLY WAY!"

ARRGGHH!

"THAT GOT HIS ATTENTION,
ALL RIGHT! I'M MOVING IN
FOR A CLOSER LOOK!"

THE ELECTRON BLASTER WORKED LIKE A CHARM... HE REALLY LOOKS OUT OF IT. THIS COULD BE OVER SOONER THAN I'D PLANNED!

WHAT? SOME... BIG ROBOT?

CAN YOU HEAR ME, SUPERMAN? I CHALLENGE YOU TO--!

SUPERMAN?

HE'S GOING UNDER AGAIN... MAYBE I DID MORE DAMAGE THAN I THOUGHT!

DARN... VISUAL SCANNERS CAN PENETRATE ONLY SO FAR... I'LL HAVE TO SUBMERGE AND GO AFTER HIM!

NEGATIVE! THAT'S JUST WHAT HE WANTS YOU TO DO!

YOU THINK SO? HE LOOKED PRETTY DAZED!

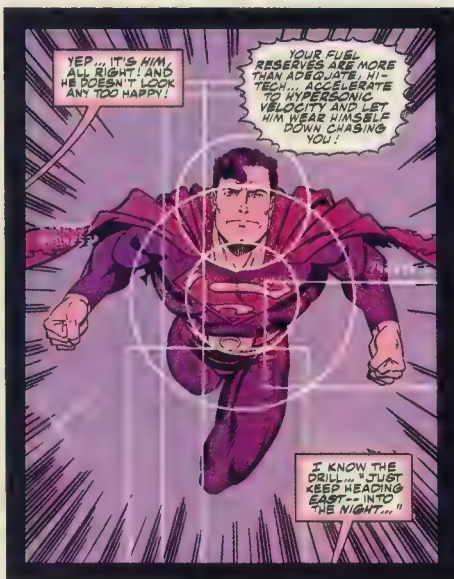
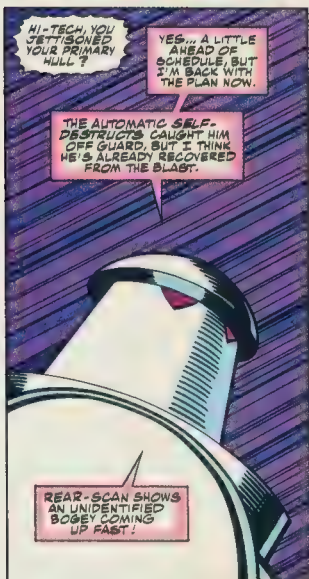
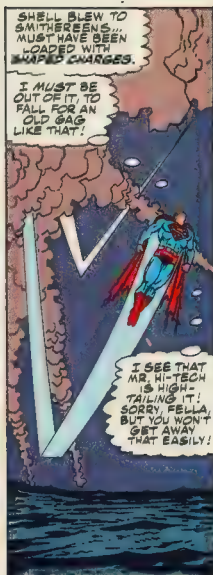
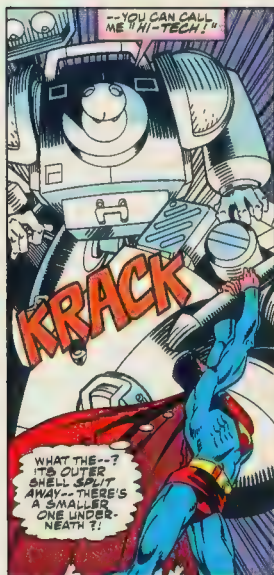
LOOKS MAY BE DECEIVING! FOLLOW THE PLAN! FALL BACK... GAIN ALTITUDE AND OBSERVE!

OKAY, BUT --WHOA!

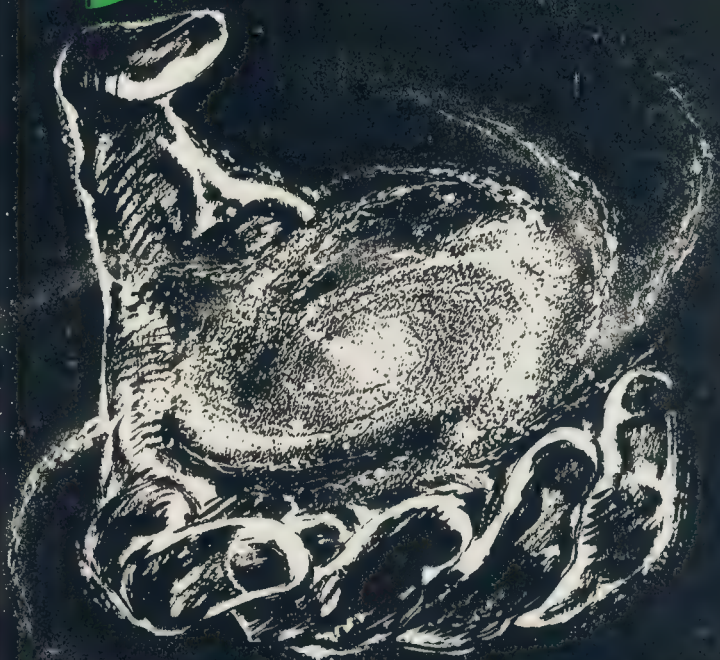
FOOSH!

ALL RIGHT, WHAT'S THIS NON-SENSE ABOUT A CHALLENGE? WHO'S RUNNING THIS FLYING BOILER? I WANT SOME ANSWERS!

THE "BOILER" HAS A NAME, SUPERGUY--



GREEN LANTERN:
**GAATHET'S
TALE**



A STORY SO EPIC IT REQUIRED TWO GREAT TALENTS TO TELL IT

LARRY NIVEN  JOHN BYRNE

"...AND DON'T MAKE IT EASY FOR HIM!"

STILL FEEL... A LITTLE WASTED, BUT IT'LL PASS. THE RUSH OF AIR HELPS SOME.

HI-TECH IS FAST, I'LL GIVE IT THAT! WE'RE ALREADY OVER WESTERN EUROPE!

BUT I'M GAINING NOW... I'LL CATCH UP AS WE REACH PARIS.

PARIS? GOOD LORD--!

THAT WAS...

--CLOSE...

...A LOT CLOSER THAN I LIKE.

HI-TECH'S WELL NAMED...IT EXECUTED SOME PRETTY SHARP TURNS WITHOUT BRAKING MUCH BELOW THE SPEED OF SOUND.

WHERE DID YOU GET THAT KIND OF POWER, HI-TECH...

"...AND WHO'S RUNNING THIS SHOW?"

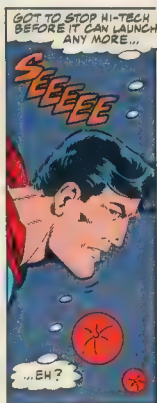
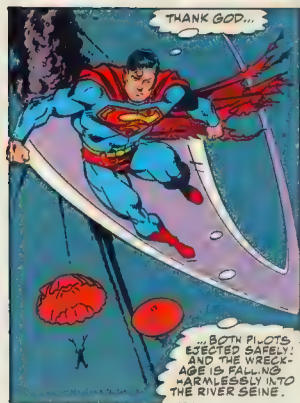
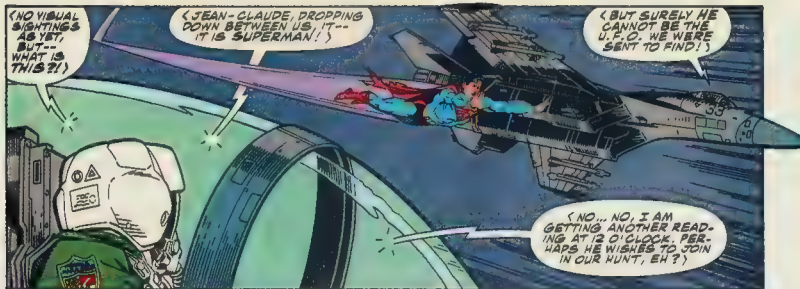
WATCH YOURSELF, HI-TECH! DESPITE ALL THAT HE'S BEEN THROUGH SO FAR, SUPERMAN IS STILL GAINING ON YOU!

AND I SEE TWO NEW BLIPS ON THE SCREEN. YOU'RE ABOUT TO HAVE COMPANY...

"I SUGGEST YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS!"

JET INTERCEPTORS?!

I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED THIS. WE MUST BE RATTLING WINDOWS ALL OVER THE FRENCH HEARTLAND!





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Chris Sprouse,
and K.S. Wilson

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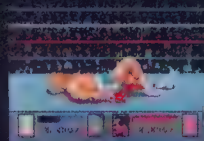


HAMMER LOCKE

AND NOW A MESSAGE FROM EVANDER HOLYFIELD.



Right down, haircut. But
you gotta be a... There are
28 hungry conf... ha... ching to
make you kiss ear... ing
before you get a shot... it's
You've got 360 deg... amp...



Sweat's gonna fly. And blood's
gonna flow. 'Cause this is no two-
bit sports simulation. This is
Evander Holyfield's "Real Deal"
Boxing — 16-bit Sega Genesis
realism right in your face.

Speed. Stamina. Power.
Defense. You design your own
boxer.



Uppercut and
punch... re you win, the
more for... and become
Evander... it's
"Real Deal" Boxing...
It's bloody. It's... Deal.
Get the message?...
De...

SEGA
GENESIS

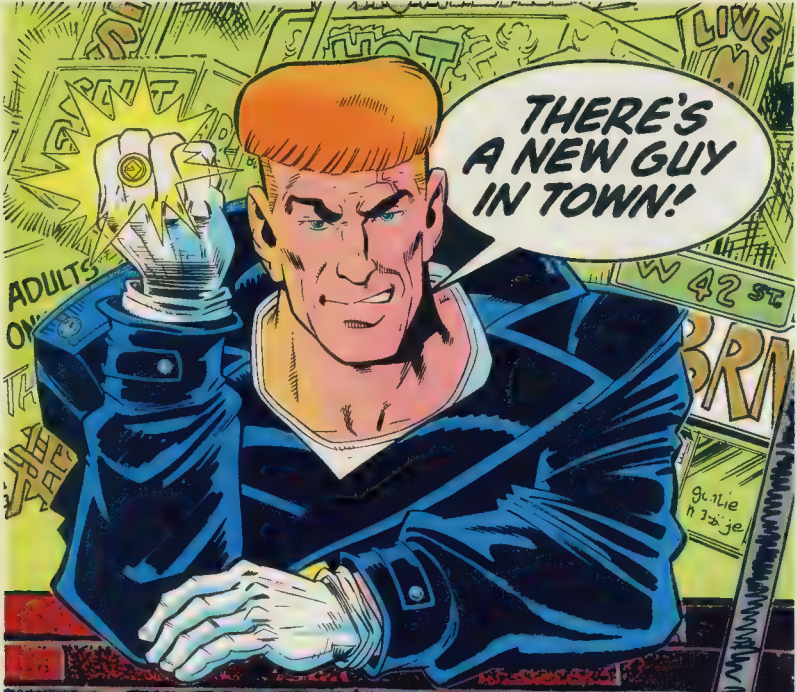
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"DUCK!"



EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S
"REAL DEAL" BOXING



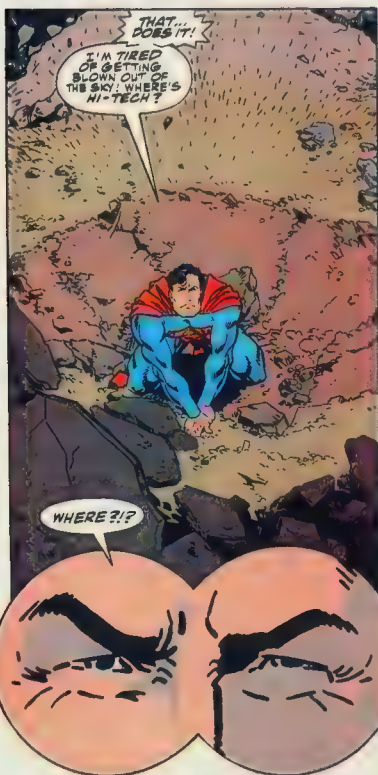
A comic book illustration of Guy Gardner. He is a man with orange hair, wearing a blue suit with a white collar. His right arm is replaced by a blue, mechanical gauntlet that is glowing with yellow energy. He has a determined, slightly menacing expression. The background is a yellow wall with various signs and graffiti. A speech bubble from his head contains the text "THERE'S A NEW GUY IN TOWN!".

THERE'S
A NEW GUY
IN TOWN!



A circular DC logo with the letters "DC" in white on a green background, surrounded by a green ring.

GUY GARDNER



THIS IS NOT GOING WELL. THAT DIRECT HIT I SCORED JUST MADE HIM ANGRY! HE'S DOING AS IF THEY WERE STANDING STILL!

DON'T LET UP, HI-TECH! TELEMETRY INDICATES HE'S STARTING TO SLOW DOWN!

YEAH, BUT SO AM I!

IT'S NOT EASY TO HEAR ANYTHING AT THESE SPEEDS--

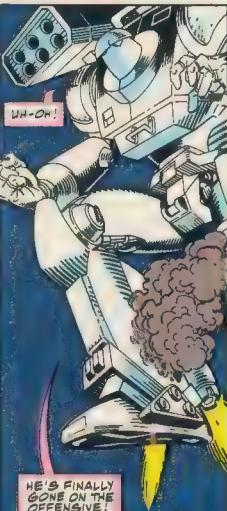
--BUT I'D SWEAR THAT I PICKED UP SNATCHES OF A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION!

LET'S SEE WHAT MAKES YOU TICK, HI-TECH!

SO! THERE'S SOMEONE INSIDE THAT TIN CAN! CAN'T GET A GOOD LOOK...

...SUCH A JUMBLE OF CIRCUITRY AND INSULATION AROUND WHOEVER'S IN THERE...

...BUT I CAN SEE ENOUGH TO KNOW WHERE TO STRIKE BACK!



UH-OH!

HE'S FINALLY GONE ON THE OFFENSIVE!

HIS HEAT VISION IS FUSING MY STARBOARD JETS: I ESTIMATE COMPLETE FAILURE IN FIVE SECONDS

THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW, HI-TECH!

YOU'RE ALREADY IN SIGHT OF THE FINAL MEDITERRANEAN STAGING AREA! EVERYTHING IS WORKING OUT PERFECTLY!

PARDON ME, BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL SO PERFECT TO BE SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL AT 500 FEET!

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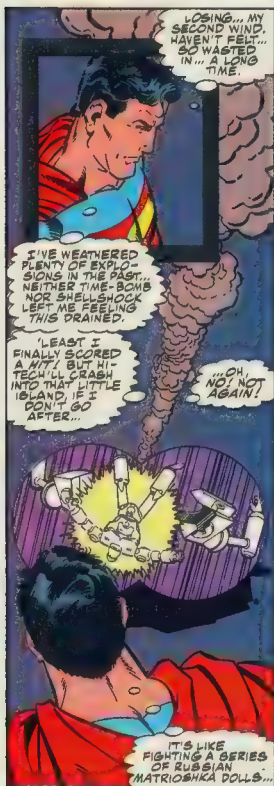
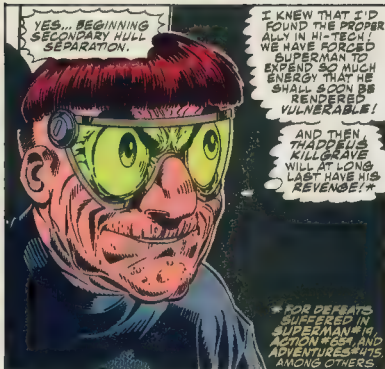
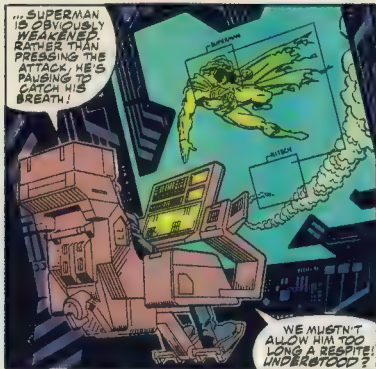


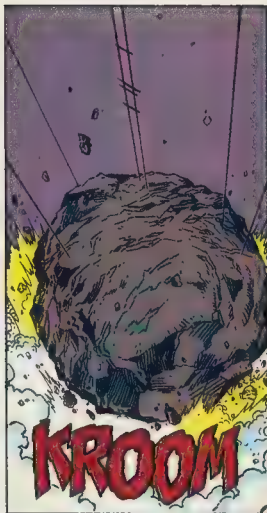
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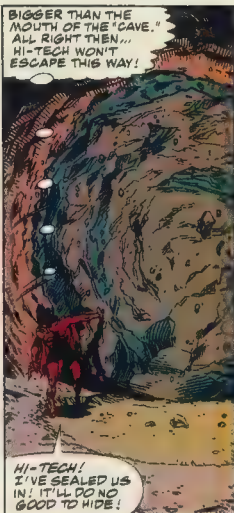




WELL... I
FLEW... RIGHT
INTO... THAT
ONE.

GOT TO...
GET MY... HEAD
TOGETHER.
THINK STRAIGHT.

THIS'S ONE...
BIG ROCK...

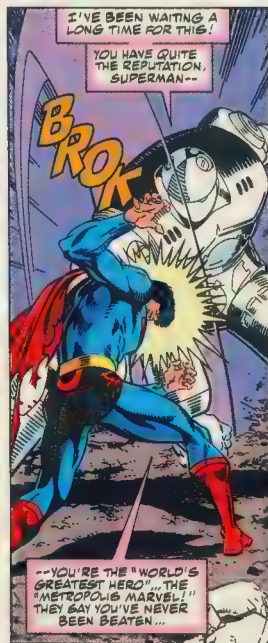


BIGGER THAN THE
MOUTH OF THE "CAVE."
ALL RIGHT THEN...
HI-TECH WON'T
ESCAPE THIS WAY!

HI-TECH!
I'VE SEALED US
IN! IT'LL DO NO
GOOD TO HIDE!



SO WHO'S
HIDING?

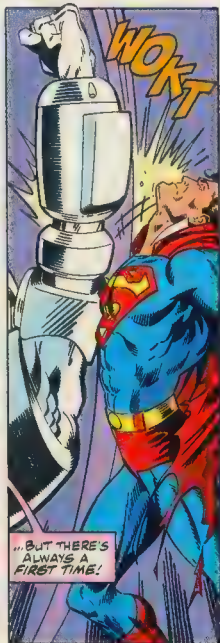


I'VE BEEN WAITING A
LONG TIME FOR THIS!

YOU HAVE QUITE
THE REPUTATION,
SUPERMAN--

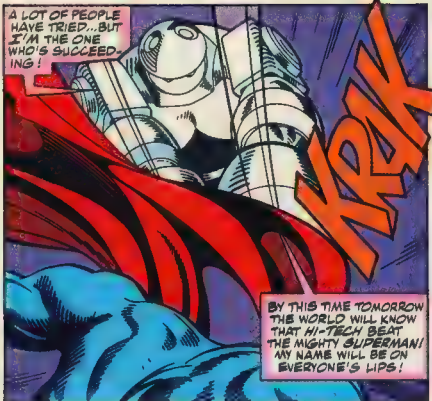
BROK

--YOU'RE THE "WORLD'S
GREATEST HERO"... THE
"METROPOLIS MARVEL!"
THEY SAY YOU'VE NEVER
BEEN BEATEN...



WOKT

"...BUT THERE'S
ALWAYS A
FIRST TIME."



A LOT OF PEOPLE
HAVE TRIED...BUT
I'M THE ONE
WHO'S SUCCEED-
ING!

BY THIS TIME TOMORROW
THE WORLD WILL KNOW
THAT HI-TECH BEAT
THE MIGHTY SUPERMAN!
MY NAME WILL BE ON
EVERYONE'S LIPS!



DON'T TAKE IT TOO HARD
...YOU'RE NOT OMNI-
POTENT! YOU CAN BE
WORN DOWN JUST
LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!

YOU'RE
RIGHT...



...BUT I'M NOT
BEATEN YET!

KRIK!

KRIK!

H-HEY!



HOW WELL...
WILL YOU FARE...
WITHOUT ALL
THAT ARMOR...

...MS. HI-
TECH?



YOU...YOU KNEW I
WAS A WOMAN?

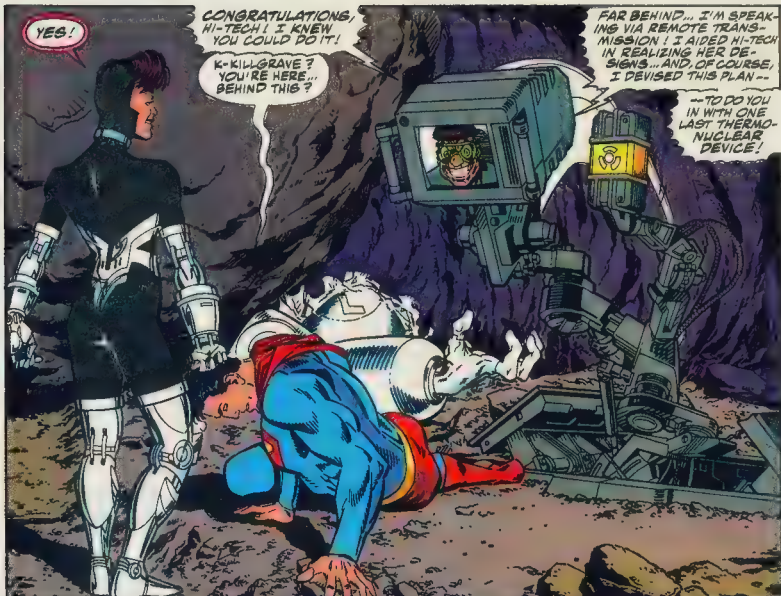
I SUB-
PECTED IT...
YOUR
SKELETAL
STRUCTURE
DIDN'T
LOOK LIKE
A MAN'S.

IS THAT WHY YOU
DIDN'T FIGHT BACK
HARDER? YOU
WERE GOING EASY
ON ME BECAUSE
I WAS A WOMAN?!
WELL, SUPERMAN,
THAT WAS A
MISTAKE!



ALL MY LIFE, MEN
HAVE UNDER-
ESTIMATED ME--

--BUT I
STILL HAVE
ENOUGH
POWER TO
BRING YOU
TO YOUR
KNEES!



YES!

CONGRATULATIONS, HI-TECH! I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT!

K-KILLGRAVE? YOU'RE HERE... BEHIND THIS?

FAR BEHIND... I'M SPEAKING VIA REMOTE TRANSMISSION! I AIDED HI-TECH IN REALIZING HER DESIGNS...AND, OF COURSE, I DEVISED THIS PLAN...

--TO DO YOU IN WITH ONE LAST THERMONUCLEAR DEVICE!

WHAT?! THAT WASN'T OUR DEAL! THE IDEA WAS TO WEAR SUPERMAN DOWN SO I COULD BEAT HIM!

YOU SAID YOU WANTED HIM HUMILIATED! MURDER WAS NOT PART OF THE PLAN!

NOT OF YOUR PLAN, MY DEAR... BUT IT WAS DEFINITELY PART OF MINE!

THE DETONATOR IS SET...

...IT'LL ALL BE OVER IN A MATTER OF MINUTES!

ARE YOU CRAZY? WITHOUT MY OUTER ARMOR, THERE'S NO WAY I CAN DIG OUT OF HERE IN TIME! I'LL BE KILLED, TOO!



UNFORTUNATE, BUT YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE.

KILLGRAVE, YOU... YOU... DAMN!

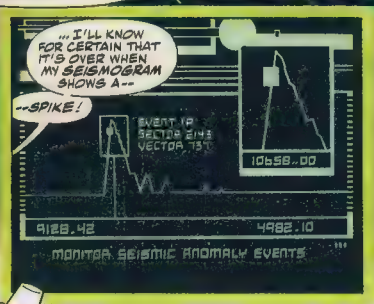
I'VE GOTTA STOP THIS THING! SUPERMAN--?

AHHH! YOU'RE NO HELP!



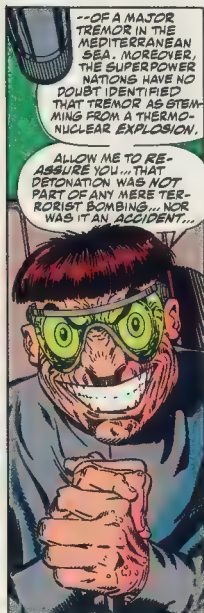
I WOULD SO HAVE ENJOYED WATCHING HI-TECH FACE HER FINAL CHALLENGE... DESPERATELY TRYING TO DEFUSE MY BOMB... IN VAIN, THE POOR DEAR!

SHE HASN'T THE NECESSARY POWER... OR THE TIME LEFT. BY THIS POINT, VICTORY IS MERELY SECONDS AWAY.



I DID IT! I SUCCEEDED WHERE ALL OTHERS HAVE FAILED!

HERE'S TO THE UNPARALLELED GENIUS OF THADDEUS KILLGRAVE!





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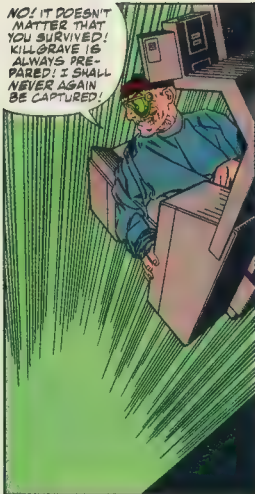
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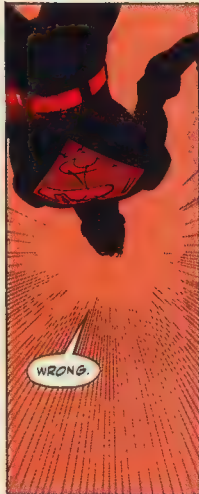
STATE _____ ZIP _____ YEAR OF BIRTH _____

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NO! IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT YOU SURVIVED! KILLORAVE IS ALWAYS PREPARED! I SHALL NEVER AGAIN BE CAPTURED!



WRONG.



THAT HEAT VISION OF YOURS IS SOMETHING ELSE!

AFTER FLYING US ALL THE WAY HERE, I'M IMPRESSED THAT YOU STILL HAVE ENERGY ENOUGH TO ZAP HIS COMMAND CHAIR!



MY BODY'S BEEN STORING SOLAR ENERGY FOR OVER 30 YEARS... I HAVE RESERVES THAT NEITHER OF YOU CONSIDERED... OR NEED TO KNOW ABOUT!

A PRISON CELL IS WAITING FOR YOU BACK IN THE STATES, PROFESSOR. AND AFTER WHAT'S GONE DOWN TODAY, YOU'RE GOING TO BE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME THERE!

BUT... MY INSTRUMENTS RECORDED THE EXPLOSION! YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE GOTTEN OUT IN TIME!

WE DIDN'T NEED TO. HI-TECH DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO COMPLETELY DISARM YOUR BOMB...

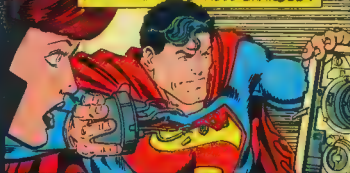


"...NOT ALONE... BUT YOU'D BOTH UNDERESTIMATED ME."

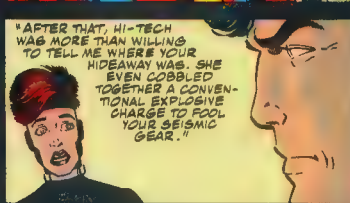
NO! I NEED TEN MINUTES TO STOP THIS TIMER, AND I HAVE LESS THAN HALF THAT!

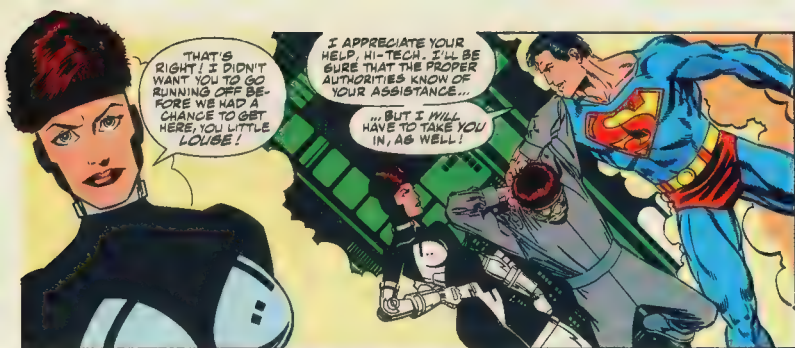


"WITH THE BOMB CASING OPEN, I HAD STRENGTH ENOUGH TO PULL APART THE FISSIONABLE CHARGES."



"AFTER THAT, HI-TECH WAS MORE THAN WILLING TO TELL ME WHERE YOUR HIDEAWAY WAS. SHE EVEN COBBLED TOGETHER A CONVENTIONAL EXPLOSIVE CHARGE TO BOOZ YOUR SEISMIC GEAR."





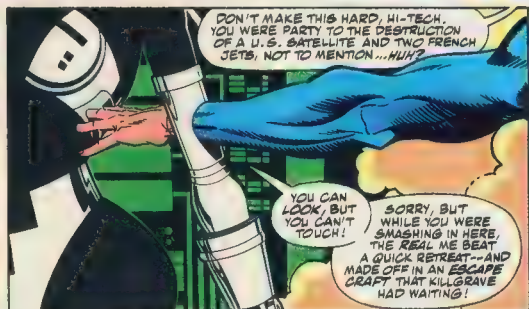
THAT'S RIGHT! I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO GO RUNNING OFF BEFORE WE HAD A CHANCE TO GET HERE, YOU LITTLE LOUSE!

I APPRECIATE YOUR HELP, HI-TECH. I'LL BE SURE THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITIES KNOW OF YOUR ASSISTANCE...

...BUT I WILL HAVE TO TAKE YOU IN, AS WELL!



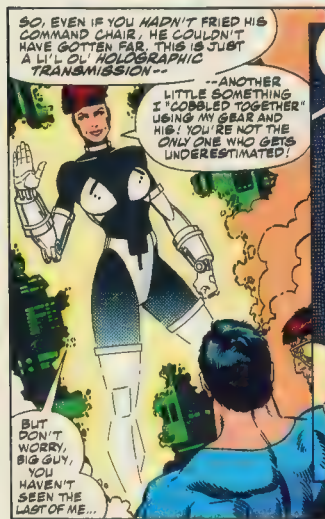
OH... I DON'T THINK SO, SUPERMAN!



DON'T MAKE THIS HARD, HI-TECH. YOU WERE PARTY TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A U.S. SATELLITE AND TWO FRENCH JETS. NOT TO MENTION...HUH?

YOU CAN LOOK, BUT YOU CAN'T TOUCH!

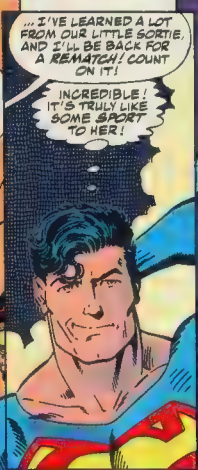
SORRY, BUT WHILE YOU WERE SMASHING IN HERE, THE REAL ME BEAT A QUICK RETREAT--AND MADE OFF IN AN ESCAPE CRAFT THAT KILLGRAVE HAD WAITING!



SO, EVEN IF YOU HADN'T FRIED HIS COMMAND CHAIR, HE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR. THIS IS JUST A LI'L OL' HOLOGRAPHIC TRANSMISSION--

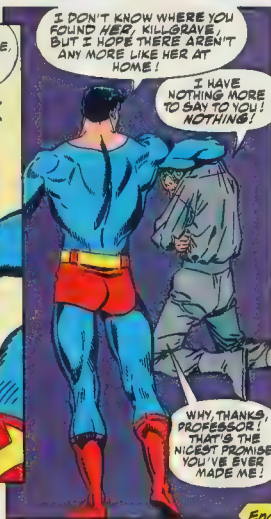
--ANOTHER LITTLE SOMETHING I "COBBLED TOGETHER" USING MY GEAR AND HIS! YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS UNDERESTIMATED!

BUT DON'T WORRY, BIG GUY, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE LAST OF ME...



... I'VE LEARNED A LOT FROM OUR LITTLE SORTIE, AND I'LL BE BACK FOR A REMATCH! COUNT ON IT!

INCREDIBLE! IT'S TRULY LIKE SOME SPORT TO HER!



I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU FOUND HER, KILLGRAVE, BUT I HOPE THERE AREN'T ANY MORE LIKE HER AT HOME!

I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY TO YOU! NOTHING!

WHY, THANKS PROFESSOR! THAT'S THE NICEST PROMISE YOU'VE EVER MADE ME!

RE:ACTION

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Whewww! ACTION COMICS #678 sure provoked a lot of controversy! Between the "I-told-you-so's" and the "I-don't-believe-it's", we picked up a heap o' mail! Here's the pick of the barrel:

Dear Mike:

Does the body rule the mind or the mind rule the body? It seems that in the SUPERMAN titles, essential identity is contained within the brain. A brain can be moved from one body to another, to a metal holder in the shape of a head, or to a nutrient tank and it will still be the same essential person. On the other hand, if a mind changes, as Superman's has on several occasions, it presents the body differently (new costume, beard or whatever).

But can a brain in a different body be the same person? Isn't personality affected by how others perceive you? Luthor the First was perceived as a tyrant by, well, pretty much everyone. People were afraid, but not unwilling, to tell him exactly what they thought of him. As Luthor the Second, he is well liked by almost everyone. Wouldn't just waking up in the morning and realizing that people genuinely like you (especially after years of being despised) have some kind of effect on a personality?

I would be interested in seeing this topic explored in future issues. Is Luthor just acting, or is he genuinely becoming a different person? Perhaps you can't keep a bad man down, but perhaps all the plastic surgery and liposuctions ads are correct: a new face and body can make a difference.

R. Kevin Doyle
Honolulu, HI

And the winner of this week's Baldy, in the area of Philosophy, is (may we have the envelope, please!) R. Kevin Doyle, for the most introspective letter! Let's give him a hand, folks! (But not a whole new body!)

Dear Mike:

I once read a book where a Christian fundamentalist explained, among other things, what rewards the good people would get in heaven. According to him, these lucky people would find themselves the instant owners of something no amount of exercising, dieting, facelifting and silicone implanting could give them here on earth: a young, lean, trim and beautifully handsome new body.

Now consider this. While Lex Luthor Sr. was alive, the doctors couldn't trim away the excess fat from his body. They couldn't grow back his hair. They couldn't give him a new, flesh-and-blood hand. And they couldn't cure his cancer. But in ACTION COMICS #678 we learn that old Lex himself is inhabiting Lex Luthor II's body. In other words, not only has old Lexie got back his hair, his hand and his health, but this new body of his is taller than the original one ever was and it is only twenty-one years old all over again! Okay people, is there anyone out there who still doesn't believe that Lex Luthor has died and gone to heaven?

Ann Sidbrant
Malmo, Sweden

Dear Editors:

I hate to write this complaint letter to you. A friend of mine, Dale Freeman, once said, "I like Superman the best because he gives his all and expects nothing in return." I feel the same way, and I think you guys are like this, too. You work so hard and you deserve so much praise for the best Superman year ever!

I am so sorry that I did not have time to praise you by sending you a letter this past year. I now have more time to write, so you will receive more letters from me.

It pains me that this first letter I've written has to be this way, but I can't help the way I feel.

You lied to us. I have never been so disappointed in a Superman comic as when I picked up ACTION #678. Eight months ago, however, this story would have been fantastic. Let me explain. When you first killed Lex Luthor, I was upset. "He can't be dead!" I cried. But then some of my friends and I kicked around an idea: maybe he wasn't dead. Maybe he was cloned by Dr. Teng. It would have been a great story. If you had capitalized on it BEFORE Lois Lane's first interview with young Lex. But that interview happened. And something wonderful began to unfold before our eyes: you developed Lex Junior's character. You did your job too well. Whereas the first Lex had been a hothead, this one was suave. I don't believe the first Lex could have hugged Superman, no matter what the circumstances. This one did a far better job of pretending he was good. This one was just plain smarter. You ask me to believe he's the same old Lex?

But the worst part is you lied to us. When readers insisted that Lex the First was still alive, you answered with a resounding "NOT!" One letter-writer even wrote in with the clone idea, and you denied it (but that is basically what you did). After this and other letters, I gave up on Lex I being alive. But it didn't matter anymore, because you had a far better villain with Lex Junior.

But then you spring this undelightful surprise! What upsets me more than you ruining the brilliant character of Lex II is the fact that you lied to us. The SUPERMAN line used to be my favorite line of comics; I'd always read them first. I have an entire post-Crisis collection. For the first time, I am considering dropping your comics. You betrayed a trust with readers like me by perpetrating this lie.

I will tentatively continue collecting your titles. Maybe something good will come of this. But if you folks lie to me again, you're history. There are other comics I can spend my hard-earned money on. I'm sorry it has to be this way, but until next week, I give this whole fiasco you have pulled a resounding "NOT!"

Richmond West
Gadsden, AL

Sorry you feel that way, Richmond, but Lex I is physically dead (maybe not brain dead...but the two are different) and Lex II is not a clone. Lex's DNA was recombined, altered, regrown...making him a better man, at least physically. A clone would be an exact duplicate of the original self. As for personality, Lex seems pretty much the same. He's devious and suave (original attributes) and he's got the kind of opportunity that only Lex Luthor could obtain to pull the rug out from under the powerful people who distrusted him the first time around!

Dear Editor:

The phenomenal success of the current SUPERMAN line of comics may have signalled the triumphant emergence of a literary trend in the industry. This trend cannot be easily categorized by naming it or otherwise pigeonholing it with a label. But there it is, in the pages of ACTION COMICS #678, something close to quality. I leave you to find that seminal book by the Buddhist known as Pirsig for a definition of quality, and suffice it to say that "They Saved Luthor's Brain"

by the super-team of Stern, Guice, Parks, Whitmore and Oakley had plenty of quality.

I like to be surprised, and without meaning to sound egotistical, I am generally not easily surprised by the plot machinations of many writers working in this industry. But this month I have been surprised twice: first by those cowed, obsessive fanatics in the Batcave who produced a recent Batman two-parter that floored me; and now by the startling, unbelievable, and wonderfully logical revelations in ACTION COMICS #678.

I never guessed that Luthor II was actually a genetic rebuilding of the original Luthor. I publicly admit my shock. As one who does not read fanzines of any kind, I had no clue as to what you guys were planning. Of course I knew you were up to something; I think most readers did, and few of us really believed the original Luthor was gone for good. Bringing him back in a fashion I never suspected is icing on the cake. Good work.

All of this and appearances by Metallo and Supergirl, too! What more can a guy ask for? I guess it doesn't get any better than this, at least until the Kryptonian Bikini and Parachute Team drops out of the clouds for an extended visit in my neck of the woods.

Thomas McNulty
Somewhereville, IL

Dear Sirs:

After the extremely disappointing "Panic in the Sky" crossover of a few issues back, I had resolved not to pick up another SUPERMAN title since I've been far from impressed with them the last few years. Then I heard that Jackson Guice, a man I've followed across a number of titles, was taking up the reins on ACTION so naturally I picked up his debut issue and haven't been disappointed since.

I was never really a fan of the original Supergirl, but have enjoyed the current incarnation's appearances since her introduction a few years back. Very little has been done with her, character-wise, and I feel Mr. Stern is doing an outstanding job of developing her past the guest-appearance-only status in which she's served since her debut.

Since I don't currently read Superman's other titles, I was especially glad to see Captain Sawyer and Inspector Turpin as well as Lana this issue. I've long felt that the supporting cast can be just as interesting and important as the lead character, and since Mr. Stern is renowned for his use of supporting characters, I'll look forward to further developments with Lana and the others in the future.

The developments concerning the "new" Lex Luthor this issue proved quite intriguing. While I was quite sure Lex was not dead, it never occurred to me that the previously unknown "son" who stepped in to pick up the pieces of his father's vast empire was indeed the same Luthor that had plagued Superman and

friends over the years. This revelation should make for a very interesting confrontation in the not so distant future.

Finally, I must take a moment to rave about the aspect which brought me to this title: Mr. Guice's art. Mr. Guice is to be commended on the fantastic work he is turning out for this title, and I hope he will stay on for quite some time.

Marson Fredrick
Ellisville, MS

No problem Marson, Mr. Guice will be around for a while. Just call him "ACTION Jackson"!

Dear Mike:

Ohhh, icky!!! I mean, like totally gross, man! Luthor's brain in a bottle! How revoltin'! And if that wasn't bad enough, you had to go and superimpose the same image onto the cover! Like I said, totally icky!

And speaking of the cover, I don't want to be finicky (this is my week of strange sounding words that rhyme with icky; please humour me and I promise I'll go away soon), but do the words "truth in advertising" mean anything to you? How many assassins fired on Luthor? [on the cover] Or was that some creative way of representing the rapid nature of the shots from a lone gunman? Oh heck, Rol, get off this tack quickly or you'll be asking for a "No-prize" before you know what's good for you...

Jackson Guice is really settling in well to the Super-books, and the art this month really suited the story—shadowy and mysterious. Full credit, I think, to Mr. Parks (another talented newcomer) for the excellent ink job. But after saying all that, you know the real reason I wrote this letter?

I TOLD YOU SO!!! Petty, I realize, but when I'm right, I'm soooo right. Unfortunately, most of the time I'm wrong. But I did know that Luthor II was Luthor I, I just didn't know how. Now I shall retire back to smugdom in peace.

Rol Hirst
Holt Head, England

Let smugdom reign, Rol. It sure as heck is reigning here!

Dear Editor:

Wow! ACTION COMICS #678 really delivered the goods on Lex Luthor. Most of us already figured that Lex II was a phony anyway, and that Lex I was somehow still alive, but I know I never guessed fully how he did it! The explanations were so simple, yet a thrill to read. Luthor really is a genius.

I love Donovan's getting the last laugh. This will keep Luthor on his toes and make for excitement to come. Now let's get the skinny on Cerberus!

Chris Khalaf
Houston, TX

We don't call it ACTION comics for nothing, Chris! And if you think Cerberus is a pain in the keister, just wait until Doomsday gets here.

—Jennifer Frank
Living in Excitement City

NEXT WEEK: In SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #17, the orphaned Keith stumbles on the secret subterranean tunnels of the mysterious Underworld while looking for his missing Mom. Will even Superman be able to find him before the sinister inhabitants of the Underworld do? Find out when Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove and Dennis Janke bring you their best in seven. P.S. Doomsday is coming.

IN TWO WEEKS: Ready or not, the future is now! The policemen of time, the Linear Men, ask Waverider to join their group! Don't you wish you could jump two weeks into the future to find out his answer? Dan Jurgens and Brett Breeding serve it up fast and furious in fourteen. P.S. Doomsday is coming...for Superman.

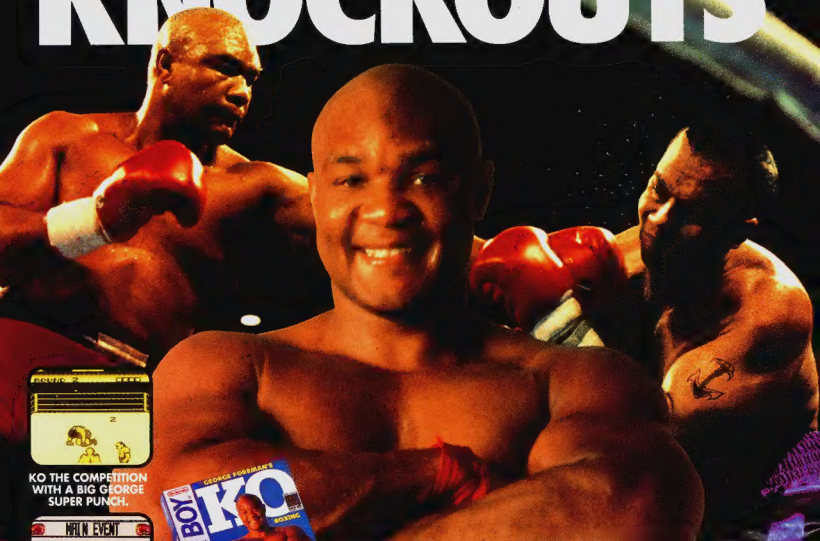
IN THREE WEEKS: If things aren't already strange enough in Metropolis...wouldn't you be surprised to find out that Lex Luthor the first was back in town and that Mr. Mxyzptlk was President of the United States? Oh...Mxy's back...well that explains everything! Actually, Jerry Ordway and Dennis Janke explain everything in twenty-one. P.S. Doomsday is still coming.

IN ONE MONTH: It's all-out ACTION when the Jackal hits Metropolis in ACTION #683! He's new in town and ready to take on all comers! Roger Stern, Jackson Guice and Denis Rodier tell all in thirty big ones. P.S. Awwww...you know what's coming...right?

This issue's cover was whipped into shape by our talented guest artists for the entire issue—Misters Dusty Abell and Terry Austin. Now all we wanna know is...who was holding the camera when you two posed for the photo-reference?



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